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# MAINTAINING CLEAN AND INVITING NEIGHBORHOOD SPACES

Maintaining clean and inviting neighborhoods is one of the fundamental building blocks of the Mayor's vision for the city and one of the most often heard requests of citizens. At the heart of this vision is the need for the government to operate more efficiently and to deliver services that optimize the quality of neighborhoods and make them inviting places to reside. This vision involves ensuring seamless delivery of core services and having an infrastructure that corresponds to the District's needs and the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Great emphasis has been placed on engaging communities and incorporating their priorities in the planning and the execution process. Customer service and accountability are integrally woven in this agenda. Agencies have worked to rollout service schedules and plans that are ward- and neighborhood-based.

In accomplishing this vision and attaining this level of output, the District has taken an affirmative path to address historical under-funding in equipment, infrastructure, and personnel. The District is conducting some realignment of human resources and infrastructure to maximize outputs and deliver services optimally across all neighborhoods. This chapter provides a sampling of the programs that will be funded and conducted in FY2002 to move this vision forward. It articulates the challenges of each program, describes their objective and the proposed level of funding. Some of the featured programs are new, many are on-going.

## Maintaining A Clean City

The Department of Public Works' Clean City Initiative encompasses the collection and disposal of solid waste and the cleaning of the District. Trash collection and urban sanitation operations are increasingly mechanized and capital intensive. Success is tied to having reliable equipment and having effective information systems that provide timely information and support management decision-making. Of equal importance is the need for a well-trained and a modern workforce. The District challenge is to deliver on-time services while sustaining the efforts to rebuild and modernize its internal capacity. Table 5-1 provides a sample of the cleaning services that the District provides.

Reducing the age of the maintenance fleet is a central part of the administration's plans because it directly impacts fleet reliability, service delivery, and productivity. Just a few years ago, the District's maintenance fleet was more than twice the national average age for equipment and was generally unreliable. Over the past few years, the District has made significant investments to address this issue and improve the replacement cycle.

Table 5-1  
Partial List of District's Cleaning Services

<b>Services</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Trash Collection	Once or twice	Weekly
Recycling	Once	Weekly
Street Sweeping	Once	Weekly
Alley Cleaning	Every 4 to 6 weeks	
Leaf Pickup	Once or twice	Yearly
Snow Clearance	Seasonal	As necessary
Christmas Tree Pickup	Seasonal	Yearly
Bulk Pickup	Upon request	
Abandoned Auto Removal	Upon request	7 to 11 days

The average age of the District's maintenance fleet has dropped from 12 years in recent times to eight years, an improvement but still three years behind the national average of five years. Steps have also been taken to improve the decision-making capacity of the operation and to incorporate community input into the process.

Citizen-based survey teams are formed on a quarterly basis to rate the cleanliness of the District and the individual wards. The results are used to determine the frequency that each area should be cleaned, as well as the level of resources needed to keep the city clean. In addition, a basic work management and activity-based costing system was installed to provide quantitative data about capacity, productivity, and efficiency. This system supports the design of routes and the deployment of resources and affords greater accountability. This capacity is enabling the Department of Public Works to develop District-wide service schedules and measure performance to schedules. During FY2001, 98 percent of trash was collected on the day scheduled, mechanical street sweeping was on target and the percentage of alleys cleaned on schedule was 85 percent. The system has become a model for sanitation management and has attracted the interest of municipalities such as Denver and Miami.

Table 5-2  
Cleaning Goals (in percent)

	<b>FY2001</b>	<b>FY2002</b>
On-time trash collection	99	100
Signed street sweeping roads on schedule	85	95
Alleys cleaned on schedule	85	94
Bulk pick up request within 10 days of request	90	95
Mission critical fleet available on a daily basis	93	98

While pleased with the improvement of the District's Clean City efforts, the administration is cognizant that the momentum has to be sustained and the bar raised to afford District neighborhoods the optimal service they deserve. The primary challenge is to maintain the trend of improvements and performance. The District has to maintain its partnership with the public, continue the citizen-based assessments as well as sustain the investments in equipment. The work force has to be trained and meet the highest standards of competence in their areas of expertise. Clean City goals for FY2002 include publishing schedules for all services in each ward and neighborhood. The District is proposing an \$8 million investment in trash packers, street sweepers, and other equipment. The city will take greater care of the equipment by adhering to

manufacturers service schedules and employing the most updated diagnostic systems. Accountability and user responsibility will be emphasized and monitored. Further investments and improvements will be made in information systems to enhance managerial capacity, increase productivity and reduce management operating time. Additional FY2002 goals include providing adequate training in technical and cross-cutting skills to increase the number of licensed and certified staff. These initiatives will improve the overall cleanliness of the District and make neighborhoods more aesthetically pleasing and inviting.

Table 5-3

District's Recent Capital Investments in Maintenance Fleet

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Average Age of Fleet</b>	<b>Productivity Savings</b>	<b>Daily Availability</b>
2000	\$10 million	7 years	5%	96%
2001	\$12 million	6 years	10%	97%
2002	\$8 million	5 years	10%	98%

### Building and Maintaining the District's Infrastructure: Highway Trust Fund Utilization

In recent years, District residents, workers and visitors have been confronted with the deterioration of the District's transportation infrastructure and a decline in the quality of the travel experience through the District. Every element of the transportation system and every area of the District have been affected. Inadequate maintenance and the poor condition of existing facilities threaten to impose much higher future rehabilitation costs if not addressed immediately. One way of ensuring funding for the upkeep and maintenance of the District's infrastructure is to alter the utilization of the Highway Trust Fund.

In 1997, the District established the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to repay a loan from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), provide the District's match for federal highway grant dollars, and cover the maintenance of District roads. The District has repaid its loan and has consistently provided the local matching funds for federal dollars, but has yet to request HTF dollars for any maintenance-related activities. The inability to utilize HTF to its fullest capacity has diminished the ability of the District Division of Transportation (DDOT) to deliver and maintain the infrastructure at the world-class standard that it aspires to achieve.

As noted in Table 5-4, the practice of reserving funds for the purpose of constructing and maintaining transportation infrastructure is not uncommon. DDOT has developed an implementation plan for fully funding its operations from the Highway Trust Fund to ensure a stable source of funding for the District's transportation needs.

Each year, DDOT will develop a proposal for both uses and sources for the HTF fund. Revenue projections and program levels will be evaluated annually for inclusion in the Mayor's budget and action by the City Council. Over time, HTF funds will be used to maintain over 1,000 miles of District streets and bridges and to manage the operation of the city's street system. Fully utilizing the current authority of the HTF and, in fact, expanding it is key to DDOT's prospective ability to consistently build, operate, and maintain a world-class transportation infrastructure.

Table 5-4  
Highway Trust Fund Utilization

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Source of Funding</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Maryland	Motor vehicle gas tax, tolls, registration fees, other revenues	To finance all capital and operating expenses relating to transportation
Virginia	Motor vehicle fuel tax, vehicle titles, license tag fees, etc.	To accelerate the receipt and use of federal funds
Connecticut	DMV fees, emission inspection, etc.	To cover operating and capital expenditure of the department.
District FY2002 proposal	Motor fuels tax and full ROW collection	To finance operating and capital transportation expenditures

Currently, the HTF is funded by collections from the District's motor fuels tax, which totals roughly \$30 million annually. DDOT has begun to collect rental payments for use or occupancy of the District's rights-of-way (ROW). Any ROW collections in excess of \$30 million will be deposited into the HTF for the maintenance or upgrade of the transportation infrastructure. Current estimates by DDOT show that more than \$2 million in excess of the \$30 million threshold will be generated this fiscal year -- resources that also could be tapped for maintenance and repair of the District's roads. Beginning in FY2002 the Mayor's budget authorizes the direction of the full ROW collections to the HTF.

Figure 5-1  
Highway Trust Fund (HTF) Spending Trends

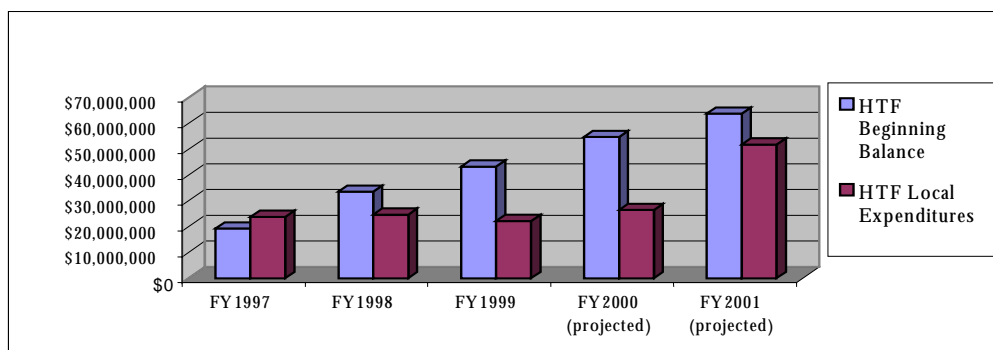


Table 5-5  
Initiatives To Be Funded By HTF

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Cost (in \$ millions)</b>	<b>Deliverable</b>
Resurfacing	\$10.0	500 blocks
Sidewalk repair	\$4.0	300 unit blocks
Sign replacement	\$1.5	One third of District signs
Lighting upgrade	\$4.0	250 street lights
Signal lamp replacement	\$5.0	9,350 lamps
Maintenance & planning staff	\$1.56	Increased efficiency and maintenance
Other infrastructure projects	\$13.2	Multi-year street-scape enhancement

## Tree Betterment and Planting Initiative

An extension of the investment in infrastructure is the city's commitment to the District's landscape. Public sentiment expressed in the Citizen Summit places the betterment and the upkeep of the city's tree stock very high on the list of actions necessary to improve neighborhoods and make them more livable. Unfortunately, the historic level of spending has not kept pace with the need and has led to the dire state of the District's trees. According to a Business Process Re-engineering Report in October 2000, the DDOT's Tree and Landscape unit has been under-funded for several years. As a result, the backlog of tree maintenance in the District of Columbia has expanded to emergency levels. Roughly half of the District's 110,000 trees need immediate attention. Additional backlogs exist in tree and stump removal (8,000) as well as a continuing need for tree replacement planting (2,500 annually). The District also needs an updated tree inventory as well as a strategy for managing its tree population. Untrimmed trees are a potential safety threat in large storms, block street lamps and traffic signs and are more susceptible to disease.

Table 5-6

Condition of District's 110,000 Trees (in public spaces not including parks)

Condition	Current	Proposal
Needing Urgent Care	Approximately half of the District's tree population (55,000) needs immediate attention	Trim 50,000 to 60,000
Stump Replacement	8,000 stumps need to be replaced	Eliminate the entire stock of dead trees (8,000)
Replanting	A need to replace 6,000 trees annually	Plant 6,000 trees

The Tree Betterment and Planting Initiative will eliminate the multi-year backlog of tree trimming and removal needs and will establish a baseline for future levels of effort and allow for the continued planting of 2,500 trees annually. This proposal seeks to bolster activity by increasing in-house and contracted services capacity.

To begin, an \$8 million increase over the base appropriation of \$1 million is necessary to fund a comprehensive trimming program for 50,000 to 60,000 trees, which equals roughly half of the District's street trees. This activity would then allow the District to establish a baseline and begin an annual 20,000 to 25,000 trees maintenance program at a cost of \$4.5 million per year. The proposal would also begin to eliminate the backlog of 8,000 dead trees and stumps.

To manage the increased contractual activity and maintain the quality of the tree inventory, five additional inspector positions would also be necessary. Other components of the proposal include the development of a District-wide tree inventory and strategic plan.

The benefits of this proposal are manifold: increased visibility of traffic signs, signals and streetlights, as well as improved resident and visitor impression of the city. It is our vision to return the city to its previous glory as the "City of Trees" through the maintenance of the District's \$1.5 billion capital asset.

## **Public Space Management Program**

Concurrent with the administration's plan to maintain and repair our infrastructure is the necessity to engage in proactive public space management. As the city enters into the information age, access to high-capacity telecommunications network lines is becoming an essential requirement to conduct business. As a result, utility and telecommunications companies are excavating in the public ROW at an unprecedented rate. From 1995 to 2000, the number of excavation permits issued annually has increased by over 300 percent. In addition, the number of utility companies working in the public ROW has swelled from four fully built monopolies to over 15 companies, 11 of which are building new networks. The increased frequency of activity taking place in the public ROW has major implications for traffic flow, roadway surface, and the drivability index for citizens. While the establishment of robust communication networks provides significant economic potential for the District, the administration has taken action to manage the process and mitigate the impacts.

During FY2000 and FY2001, the District carried out regulatory reforms, automated the permit issuing process and coordinated excavations. DDOT is proposing to escalate the District's vigilance and effectiveness by:

- Increasing the District's enforcement capacity;
- Streamlining the permit issuing process; and
- Integrating the permit processing and enforcement efforts into a GIS (spatial analysis) platform.

This management program would reallocate \$330,000 and require \$792,000 to hire 24 Neighborhood Infrastructure Maintenance Officers (NIMO). They would enforce public space permit conditions and serve as stewards of the public space, reporting any deficiencies to the appropriate party for correction. It would also include \$99,000 to hire three additional staff persons to expedite surface and subsurface Rights-of-Way permit issuance. In addition, the initiative will require \$400,000 for the purchase of the integrated GIS ROW management computer systems.

This proposal will significantly improve the District's ability to manage the public ROW and dramatically improve the timeliness and accountability of permit processing. In addition, the NIMOs will allow for better enforcement of permit conditions, greater stewardship of the public space, and improved navigability of our roads. Quality management of the public ROW will facilitate the upgrading of the District's telecommunication infrastructure, attract investments, and make the District an even greater place to live.

## **Parks and Recreational Facilities**

Another important element of healthy communities and neighborhoods is quality neighborhood facilities, parks, and recreation centers where residents can gather and hold community functions. The District operates 612 properties that are located in virtually every neighborhood and community and provide a myriad of services to support communities. Programs provided by the Department of Parks and Recreation include, but are not limited to:

- Safe child care and child development programs;
- Places for families to relax and play;
- Programming to serve community enhancement;

- Preventative Health through fitness programs and health expos;
- Facilities for community gathering;
- Physical fitness and education; and
- Support to special groups, such as seniors, the disabled, and at-risk youth.

Unfortunately, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) centers are grappling with the impact of historic underinvestment in programs and infrastructure. The cumulative impact of deferred maintenance is that large-scale capital improvements are now required to restore the operational capacity and aesthetic qualities of the facilities. In March/April 2000, DPR staff completed its first comprehensive facility rating, which included evaluations of building safety, functionality, and cleanliness. Table 5.7 summarizes the findings by function and ward.

Table 5-7  
Rating of District's Park and Recreation Facilities (by ward)

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Overall rating: Recreation Centers</b>	<b>Overall rating: Parks</b>	<b>Overall rating: Ballfields</b>	<b>Overall ward rating</b>
Ward 1	B-	B-	B	B-
Ward 2	B-	B-	B-	B-
Ward 3	B-	C+	C+	B-
Ward 4	C+	C+	C+	C+
Ward 5	B-	C+	B-	C+
Ward 6	D	C	C	C
Ward 7	B-	C+	C	C+
Ward 8	C+	C+	C	C+

A further example of historic underinvestment involves DPR playgrounds. In 1999 and 2000, the department conducted a thorough safety inspection of its 76 playgrounds. The result was that DPR removed unsafe equipment from 43 playgrounds. The replacement is now complete and cost \$500,000 in FY2000 (plus a comparable amount in FY1999). Continued inspection and maintenance are essential to preclude such high expenditures in the future.

The public has an increasing demand for services, access, and availability. As people live longer, increased numbers of older adults are seeking activities to keep them healthy and provide social opportunities. Parents experiencing longer workdays and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families parents entering the workforce create demand for more access and service in after-school programs. Baby boomers, having achieved career success and stability, are looking for programming that addresses spiritual, creative, and stress-reduction activities. At-risk youth pose a challenge to provide options and healthy choices for building stable lives.

The National Recreation and Parks Association has noted that the role of parks departments throughout the nation, and especially in urban areas, is being redefined. Increasingly, parks departments are being funded to provide services beyond traditional recreation such as childcare, youth intervention, preventive health programs, park policing, and GED education. The City of Phoenix Parks Department, in cooperation with the Police Department, operates an alternative

to incarceration program for arrested minors. Urban Park Rangers, a program that trains citizens to patrol parks, has become a national movement. The City of Indianapolis Parks operates educational programming (GED, English as a Second Language) through partnerships with nonprofit education organizations. In many cities, including Boston, the corporate and philanthropic community has stepped in to provide additional support to after-school programs. The lack of after-school activities has been identified as a serious national programming need. Research institutions including the Wellesley College Center for Women's Studies and the Urban Institute are conducting longitudinal studies of the effects of welfare-to-work and best practices in assisting working mothers. Additionally, inner city parks departments (Houston, Austin, Atlanta, Indianapolis, and Phoenix) are providing at-risk youth intervention services.

The FY2002 budget for DPR maintains baseline funding of \$33,805,796 in local funds and \$2 million in capital funds. This budget supports a two-pronged strategy of ensuring an adequate program mix and sustaining a sensible and affordable level of investment in facilities. New FTEs will be added to boost programs at the recreation centers and to enhance facility maintenance. These individuals will assist in providing on-going janitorial and maintenance services as well as enabling more structure in department programming. The \$2 million capital outlay will be used to bolster expenditures on infrastructure improvements in areas such as: roofing, heating and air conditioning, pool replacement, working water fountains, soil erosion control, replacement of playground equipment, and other general improvements. Efforts will be made to accelerate the existing project to upgrade the lighting and electrical facilities for maximum efficiency. In addition, the department is hiring a project management firm to direct/assume planning, design, and implementation of capital projects. This will greatly expedite the department's ability to bring projects to completion in a timely manner.

Figure 5-2

Sample FY2002 Department of Parks and Recreation Deliverables

- All indoor and outdoor pools will open and close on time and operate without any serious injuries or fatalities;
- Specialized adolescent activities will be provided in at least three centers throughout the summer;
- 30 roving leaders will be actively deployed in the communities to reach at-risk youth;
- 75 percent of all DPR child care slots will obtain accreditation;
- All parks and play fields will be trimmed bi-weekly; and
- A certified playground inspector will inspect all playgrounds three times a year.

### **Addressing Neighborhood Ills: Rodent Control Program**

Rodent infestation continues to be one of the major challenges that denigrates the quality of life in the District. Beyond improving the District's services and developing its infrastructure, lies the need to address long-standing problems that plague neighborhoods. The rat population has

been one of the major concerns of District residents and one of the challenges that the Mayor has vowed to resolve.

For the past 20 years, the District has experienced an overwhelming increase in the rat population and corresponding complaints by residents. This exacerbation is the culmination of an abatement program that was too broad and lacked follow through on code enforcement. It was also due to inadequate codes and fines associated with conditions of community hygiene that have exacerbated the rat population increase. Program funding has been woefully inadequate and targeting of staff duties has not focused on areas such as outreach and education, surveys, and enforcement. The abatement results have not occurred in the past due to increasing reactive response instead of proactive strategies.

The problem is centered on the District's environment that provides a domestic food supply and rodent harborage due to an aging infrastructure and unkempt landscaping. These conditions are due to poor waste handling practices, including failure of businesses and citizens to containerize their wastes properly. During October 2000, emergency legislation was passed to create a Bureau of Rodent Control in the Department of Health. Concurrently, steps were undertaken to develop basic civil infraction fines at a significant level to gain compliance with poor waste handling. For instance, business establishment and commercial property fines were established at \$1,000 for the first offense and \$2,000 for each subsequent occurrence. These undertakings are part of the District's comprehensive multi-year rat abatement campaign.

The Department of Health is in the second year of implementing this plan that includes surveys, inspections, education/outreach, abatement (baiting, trapping), and enforcement. The sustainability and success of the program is dependent on adequate funding and unabated application. A number of cities have attempted to implement quick fix strategies with poor results. Within two to four years, the rat population in these cities rebounded and resulted in a more costly reinvestment of resources.

Table 5-8  
Selected Goals of the Rat Abatement Program

	<b>FY2001</b>	<b>FY2002</b>
Reduction in infestation	15%	20%
Outreach (distributed materials)	80,000	80,000
Completion of Animal Disease Control Bureau	N/A	√

Integral to the plan is the need to maintain a sustained level of outreach and community engagement. The FY2002 plan involves sustaining or surpassing the current level of outreach and information dissemination. It involves escalating efforts to reduce infestation, complete the formation of an animal disease control bureau, and finalize the District's sewer-baiting contract.

### **Abandoned Auto Removal**

Abandoned autos are one of the most prevalent eyesores and impediments to the betterment of many neighborhoods. Automobiles are considered abandoned after being left in the same place, public or private, for more than 72 consecutive hours without the consent of the owners or person in control of the property. Junk automobiles refer to any vehicle that is wrecked, dismantled, or in irreparable condition.

Abandoned automobiles and junk vehicles pose a major threat to residents, particularly children, who can become trapped inside. They are often used by drug dealers to store narcotics and conduct illicit activities. In addition, they harbor rats, lead to rodent infestation, and cause traffic congestion. The District receives about 1,400 reports of abandoned vehicles per month or approximately 17,000 per year. Based on the current processes and legal framework, it takes the District 7 to 11 days to remove abandoned automobiles from the streets and 90 or more days from private property.

One of the ways the Mayor plans to improve neighborhoods is to alter the abandoned vehicle process and accelerate their removal. A Business Process Reengineering (BPR) report contains specific recommendations for legal and systematic changes. The project identified significant improvements in process, technology, and law that will expedite the impoundment and auctioning process. The recommendations have varying time frames from quick hits that can be implemented in 30 days or less to long-term solutions, which may take more than a year for implementation. The District is moving swiftly to implement these recommendations and expedite the removal of abandoned vehicles from neighborhoods.

Figure 5-3  
Proposals for Abandoned Vehicles

- Reduce the time period for having abandoned vehicles towed from 72 hours to 48 hours;
- Advertise auctions without noting specific vehicles, providing list of vehicles on website; and
- Reduce waiting period for auctioning vehicle from 45 days to 21 days.

Legislation has been transmitted to Council to reduce the regulatory time requirements for the removal of vehicles from private property. The FY2002 budget includes \$1 million to finance the abandoned automobiles operation and implement the recommendations noted in the BPR. Financial benefits include an annual saving of \$ 556,300 and net increase in income of \$880,950. Of most significance and value are the benefits that District neighborhoods will reap in terms of reduced risk to children, reduced neighborhood drug dealing, reduced rodent infestation, and reduced traffic congestion.

## **Conclusion**

The challenge facing the administration is to effectively direct resources and government activities to provide better quality services and efficiently respond to citizen needs. The District deserves neighborhoods that are clean, aesthetically pleasing, and inviting. The proposed FY2002 budget and program agenda for making clean and inviting neighborhood places are designed to make the government work for all neighborhoods.